

NEWSCAST

MARINE
RECREATIONAL
INFORMATION
PROGRAM



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An update for members and partners of the new Marine Recreational Information Program

From the Chairman's Desk

This will be my last update to you as chairman of the Executive Steering Committee. At the end of this month, I will retire from NOAA after 34 years of government service. It's difficult leaving at such a critical phase of this collective effort, but I rest easy knowing the program is on the right track and under strong, competent leadership.

To help guide us through the transition, Gordon Colvin, leader of our angler registry team lead, will assume the duties of ESC's Executive Secretary.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work and commitment to building a data program we can all trust. In particular, it's worth noting that we would not have witnessed the progress we have without our state, interstate, and council partners devoting their precious staff and resources to the effort. I've enjoyed working with such a bright and diverse group and look forward to following the continuing progress towards realizing the promise of MRIP.

Dr. John Boreman
Chair, Executive Steering Committee

National Saltwater Angler Registry Update

A rule to register the nation's saltwater anglers to improve the management of fish is not yet finalized. Once it is, the final rule and information regarding the registration process and requirements will immediately be updated on NOAA's Fisheries Service website <http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov>. Until a final rule is adopted, anglers and spearfishers who fish recreationally in federal ocean waters, and for anadromous species, will not be required to register with NOAA Fisheries.

External Review of For-Hire Methods

The results of an independent review and assessment of the current data collection methods for the for-hire sector were delivered at a meeting of the For-Hire Workgroup on December 4th in Silver Spring, MD. The external review covered both census and sampling survey methods currently in use for monitoring for-hire fishing effort and catch. The draft report identified several methodological improvements to sampling and estimation designs that would enhance the data collection programs. In addition, the reviewers recommended establishing an ongoing process of continual evaluation of survey methods. The For-Hire Workgroup will consider the report findings and make recommendations to the Operations Team for consideration early next year.

Presentations from the meeting are available by visiting <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mrip/aboutus/organization/forhiregroup.html>.

Documentation Project Completed

The Data Management and Standards Group completed an initial step towards data standardization by identifying and inventorying existing recreational fishing data collection programs. The report serves as the basis for the next phase of the effort which will recommend minimum data elements and regional and national standards. A full copy of the report is available at: <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mrip/aboutus/organization/datamanagement.html>.

MRIP In the News

An article in the December 8th edition of the *Annapolis (MD) Capitol* newspaper provided an update on the angler registry.

The November 27th issue of *The Fishermen* magazine noted the importance of accurate data and the fishing community's hope for MRIP.

A November 20th public meeting on the future of a saltwater fishing license in New Hampshire was covered in an article by the *Seacoast (NH)* newspaper.

The November 10th *Providence Journal (RI)* newspaper covered the meeting of the state's new saltwater license working group.

MRIP and the angler registry were central topics in several articles in the *Asbury Park Press (NJ)* newspaper from early November.

Upcoming Events

Jan 8-11 Garden State Outdoor Sportsmen's Show, Edison, NJ

Click www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov for a complete schedule of upcoming briefings. If you're interested in inviting a representative of the initiative to provide a briefing to your organization, please contact Forbes Darby.

Newscast updates are e-mailed monthly to NOAA Fisheries, state natural resource agencies, marine fisheries commissions, fishery management councils and members of the sportfishing community with an interest in the initiative to improve saltwater recreational fishing information. For more information, contact Forbes Darby at forbes.darby@noaa.gov or by phone at (301) 713-9501.